United Nations S/2006/496

Security Council

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English
Original: Arabic

Letter dated 7 July 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to inform you that the Lebanese Government requests the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for an additional period of six months, i.e., to 31 January 2007, under Security Council resolutions 425 and 426, both of 19 March 1978. In this regard, the Lebanese Government emphasizes the following points:

1. Prevailing conditions in the region necessitate the continued presence of UNIFIL and its mission, inasmuch as Israel continues to violate resolution 425 (1978), which calls for respect for Lebanon's sovereignty and the restoration of international peace and security in the region. Indeed, Israel continues its violations of Lebanese sovereignty and its threats to Lebanon's security and peace, despite your repeated appeals to it to cease those violations, which the Security Council, in its resolution 1655 (2006), characterized as "continuing".

2. Given the current conditions in the region, the UNIFIL forces must be maintained without any change in their terms of reference or in their numbers. This is the conclusion reached by you in paragraph 40 of your report dated 18 January 2006 (S/2006/26), considering that a fundamental part of the UNIFIL mission, as defined in paragraph 3 of resolution 425 (1978), has yet to be realized, particularly with regard to restoring international peace and security in the region.

3. The Lebanese Government is continuing its efforts to strengthen its authority in the South and to revitalize and develop the region politically, economically and socially. It reaffirms its strong desire to maintain security in the region of the South, where the Lebanese armed forces continue to strengthen their presence with a view to preventing any security violations from occurring. They coordinate with UNIFIL and with your personal representative in Lebanon with a view to achieving that end.

4. The Lebanese Government greatly appreciates the contribution made by UNIFIL to operations to remove the thousands of mines left by Israel in Lebanese territory, which have caused dozens of casualties, prevent freedom of movement of the members of UNIFIL and bar extensive areas of the territory from any possibility of cultivation or economic or social use. In this connection, Lebanon demands that the Security Council require Israel to turn over the remaining maps of the locations of the mines left by it in Lebanese territory.

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5. The Lebanese Government appreciates the sacrifices made by the members of UNIFIL and thanks the States that have contributed forces, in particular the People's Republic of China, which has recently joined those States. The Lebanese Government reaffirms its commitment to the peace process in the Middle East, aimed at the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted in Beirut in March 2002.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Caroline **Ziadeh**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Security Council

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Note by the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 10 July 2006 from the Chairman of the Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict addressed to the President of the Security Council (see annex). This letter introduces the report on the activities of the Group since the adoption of resolution 1612 (2005) on 26 July 2005.

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Annex

[Original: French]

Letter dated 10 July 2006 from the Chairman of the Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as Chairman of the Working Group of the Security Council on children and armed conflict, I have the honour to submit a report on the activities of this Group since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) on 26 July 2005 (see enclosure).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jean-Marc **de La Sablière**
Chairman
Working Group of the Security Council
on children and armed conflict

Enclosure

Report on the activities of the Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict since the adoption of resolution 1612 (2005) on 26 July 2005

I. Introduction

The Security Council adopted at its 5235th meeting on 26 July 2005 resolution 1612 (2005) on children and armed conflict, jointly sponsored by Benin and France.

In paragraph 8 of the resolution, the Council "*Decides* to establish a working group of the Security Council consisting of all members of the Council to review the reports of the mechanism referred to in paragraph 3 of this resolution, to review progress in the development and implementation of the action plans mentioned in paragraph 7 of this resolution and to consider other relevant information presented to it, *decides further* that the working group shall:

(a) Make recommendations to the Council on possible measures to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including through recommendations on appropriate mandates for peacekeeping missions and recommendations with respect to the parties to the conflict;

(b) Address requests, as appropriate, to other bodies within the United Nations system for action to support implementation of this resolution in accordance with their respective mandates".

After consultations among the members of the Security Council, it was agreed that Mr. Jean-Marc de la Sablière, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, would serve as Chairman of the Working Group (see S/2005/659).

Since that decision, which effectively established it, the Working Group has held four formal meetings, on 16 November 2005, 21 February 2006, 2 May 2006 and 26 June 2006. Following each one of those meetings, the Chairman issued brief press statements which are available on the website of the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations.

II. Establishment of the Working Group

At its meeting of 16 November 2005, the Working Group decided as follows:

Initially, it would hold a meeting every two months, possibly including ad hoc meetings when necessary;

The initial meetings would focus on the establishment of the monitoring and reporting mechanism referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 1612 (2005) in order for the Working Group to provide assistance and support to the Secretary-General, as appropriate. An effective mechanism is the key to the proper functioning of the Working Group.

Three tasks were assigned to the Chairman:

(a) Preparing detailed terms of reference for the Group;

(b) Preparing a provisional programme of work for 2006 spreading out the Group's work throughout the year. The programme of work provides the Secretary-General and members of the Group with a clear indication as to when specific issues will be taken up and allows them to make appropriate arrangements;

(c) Preparing guidelines for submission of reports by the Secretary-General to the Group so as to provide for a format that is as clear as possible.

The Chairman submitted the three above-mentioned documents at the meeting of 21 February 2006. Following extensive consultations, agreement was reached on those texts at the 2 May 2006 meeting. It was agreed that the Working Group's terms of reference would be issued as a document of the Security Council through the President of the Security Council. That document was issued on 3 May 2006 (S/2006/275). The two other documents are internal documents of the Working Group and have been provided to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) only.

In the document detailing its mandate, the Working Group recalled that it "shall conduct its work in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1612 (2005)" and indicated how it would go about doing so:

> "The Working Group will examine information on compliance and progress in ending the recruitment and use of children and other violations being committed against children in situations of armed conflict on the agenda of the Security Council and in situations of armed conflict not on the agenda of the Security Council mentioned in annex II to the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/72). The discussion on the latter situations shall be done in close consultation with countries concerned. The Working Group will review this arrangement one year after the adoption of its terms of reference. The consideration of any information by the Working Group shall not prejudge or imply a recommendation as to whether or not to include a situation on the agenda of the Security Council.
>
> "The recommendations of the Working Group to the Security Council do not prejudge of the Council's decisions thereon."

At its meeting of 2 May, the Working Group tasked the Chairman with preparing an informal "toolbox" for the Working Group identifying possible types of direct action or recommendations that the Working Group could make to the Council within its mandate. Discussions on the draft working paper prepared by the Chairman are ongoing.

III. Substantive issues addressed

1. First meeting (23 November 2005)

At its inaugural meeting, which started with the screening of a film entitled "A duty to protect: justice for child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo" produced by the non-governmental organization Witness in 2005, the Working Group heard presentations by Ms. Jane Lute, Deputy Director of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Kul Gautam, Deputy Executive Director of

UNICEF. They provided an update on the implementation of the monitoring and reporting mechanism, using the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia as examples. The UNICEF representative also referred to other countries.

Ms. Lute noted that the first reports of the mechanism were to be submitted to the office of the Special Representative by the end of January 2006. The office and UNICEF had undertaken joint field missions to implement the mechanism, including in Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Gautam made the following five points: UNICEF conceived of its role as providing support for the Security Council resolutions as part of its mandate to promote the best interest of the child; in that spirit, the mechanism should strengthen, and not threaten, the humanitarian programmes of UNICEF; the safety of those in the field in charge of implementing the mechanism must be ensured at all times; excluding certain parties to conflicts from the scope of the mechanism would seriously undermine the credibility of both the mechanism and the United Nations agencies responsible for its implementation; the mechanism must be strengthened gradually, with its reports being subject to close monitoring by the Security Council.

At that same meeting, the Group mandated the Chairman to convey to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly the need to urgently fill the post of Special Representative in view of the key role that the latter must play in the establishment of the mechanism and follow-up to resolution 1612 (2005).

2. Second meeting (21 February 2006)

At its second meeting, on 21 February 2006, the Group heard briefings by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hédi Annabi, and by Ms. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF.

Mr. Annabi briefed the Group on the implementation of resolution 1612 (2005). In particular, he informed the Group about the joint mission of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNICEF to Côte d'Ivoire, which focused on the implementation of resolution 1612 (2005). Other visits were being prepared (Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Sudan, Nepal and Sri Lanka). Two technical forums on the monitoring and reporting mechanism had been organized by UNICEF. Participants had expressed concern that the Council should be able to take concrete decisions. The mechanism should not merely be a system for producing documentation. Finally, some thought should be given to the impact of its establishment on the resources of United Nations agencies and of partner non-governmental organizations.

Ms. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, and the Chairman of the Group, speaking in his national capacity, enumerated the key lessons that had emerged from the joint visit by Mr. Philippe Douste-Blazy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, and Ms. Salah to Uganda and Burundi on 4 and 5 February 2006. Ms. Salah's statement was illustrated by a brief UNICEF documentary.

The Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF made the following recommendations, inter alia: peace process in Burundi should be strengthened; a political solution was needed to the conflict in northern Uganda; the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) must immediately cease recruiting, and must demobilize, the children it was using; the Government of Uganda must protect all civilians and

help displaced persons to return home when conditions permitted. It should provide security in and around the camps, in particular for humanitarian staff; the national armed forces should set up a system for preventing the recruitment of children. She added that the humanitarian agencies had specifically requested that the two lists relating to the monitoring and reporting mechanism should be merged. Ms. Salah concluded her report by thanking the French Foreign Minister for inviting her to take part in the mission, and commended him on his personal commitment.

The Chairman of the Group, speaking in his national capacity, said that it was essential to focus on the sustainable reintegration of children into society, in particular children's education; Mr. Douste-Blazy would provide follow-up with the European Union bodies to ensure that existing tools, in particular financial, were fully mobilized.

3. Third meeting (2 May 2006)

At its third meeting, on 2 May 2006, the Working Group welcomed the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy. UNICEF was represented by Mr. Daniel Toole, Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes.

Speaking for both herself and UNICEF, Ms. Coomaraswamy welcomed the progress made in combating impunity for individuals who violated children's rights as attested by Thomas Lubanga's transfer to The Hague. She was still in the process of preparing her action plan, but she wished to strengthen her office's focus on refugee and displaced children and on child victims of sexual violence. In that spirit, she invited the Group not to focus on child soldiers alone. She stated that she would shortly be visiting Uganda, at that country's invitation, and that she would send a special adviser to undertake a similar visit to Sri Lanka. She would also be going to Nepal, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan. She emphasized the importance of her cooperation with UNICEF and her desire for the Group's work to be as transparent as possible. She circulated a table illustrating the resolution's implementation, disaggregated by country, to the members of the Group.

4. Fourth meeting (26 June 2006)

At its fourth meeting, on 26 June 2006, the Working Group was briefed by Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and by Ms. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF.

At that meeting the Group discussed the Secretary-General's first report on a specific situation of armed conflict which is on the agenda of the Security Council and in which grave violations of the rights of the child are committed, i.e. the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2006/389). Ms. Coomaraswamy introduced the Secretary-General's report and noted its three main conclusions:

It was the responsibility of all regional actors, including the neighbouring States, to bring the violations to an end; groups and individuals, in particular Laurent Nkunda, that totally disregarded Security Council decisions should be denied access to ways and means of continuing their crimes; their freedom of

movement throughout Congolese territory and towards neighbouring countries such as Rwanda must be ended;

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be supported in its efforts to discharge its obligation to protect children affected by the armed conflict, including against sexual violence; it must strengthen the military and civilian systems of justice and put an end to impunity;

The international community must provide the resources needed to support the reintegration of children into their communities of origin.

The Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, invited by the Working Group to express his views on the report, assured the Group of the determination of the Congolese authorities to put an end to the abuses and to cooperate with the international community to that end. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomed the report of the Secretary-General and the recommendations contained therein, with the exception of that on the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission, the content of which would need to be made explicit. He urged the international community to help the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in implementing programmes for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. With regard to acts of violence by certain elements of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), the Ambassador referred to a "shared responsibility" if those involved had previously been integrated under the *brassage* process with the support of the international community. He called for international cooperation to secure the arrest of Laurent Nkunda. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was very favourable to the prospect of a visit by Ms. Coomaraswamy.

The Working Group then held an exchange of views, the main elements of which were as follows:

The quality of the report was emphasized by everyone, and the Secretary-General's analysis and recommendations met with a favourable response;

There was encouraging and positive cooperation by the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

Measures to combat impunity were essential; several speakers referred to the additional steps taken by the International Criminal Court and to the transfer of Thomas Lubanga. Some members called for firm measures against L. Nkunda in particular;

Most of the participants called for the adoption of vigorous specific recommendations;

The role of donors was critical in assisting the Congolese authorities in discharging their obligations;

The Working Group should ensure that, in the discussions to be held with the authorities yet to be elected on the continuation of an international presence in the country, the protection of children remains a priority;

There was general support for the Secretary-General's intention to send his Special Representative on a mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular to contribute to discussion of renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

Ms. Coomaraswamy stated that she would travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and base her activities on the recommendations of the Council following its consideration of the report, which she expected to see adopted in the very near future.

Following the discussion, the experts were entrusted with negotiating the Group's draft recommendations to the Council as follow-up to the Secretary-General's report. These recommendations will be adopted no later than the next meeting of the Working Group.

Ms. Rima Salah then introduced the Secretary-General's "*horizontal note*" drawing attention to three crises, in Chad, Sri Lanka and Somalia. She also briefed the Working Group on the status of the review of the "Cape Town principles" on children in armed conflict, to be concluded at a conference in Paris at the end of the year.

Ms. Coomaraswamy reported on her recent mission to Uganda (3-10 June 2006). The LRA represented the principal threat to children in the north of the country. While the Ugandan authorities had no active policy of recruiting children, it was the case that children were present in Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) and Local Defence Unit (LDU) contingents. She informed the Group on the commitments made by President Museveni to rectify this de facto situation.

Lastly, the Working Group entrusted the Chairman with drawing the attention of the Secretary-General to resolution 1612 (2005), paragraph 3, on the monitoring and reporting mechanism, which provides for an independent review of the implementation of the mechanism whose findings and recommendations are to be reported to the Security Council by 31 July 2006.

IV. Final observations

The Working Group of the Security Council on children and armed conflict has, in the space of a few months, made a positive start and has adopted a set of decisions necessary for its effective functioning.

The Group has also acted as an effective spur in accelerating the appointment of a new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, which ultimately took place on 7 February 2006, and in following up and promoting the establishment of the monitoring and reporting mechanism in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005).

At its meeting of 26 June 2006 the Group embarked on a new stage of its work by beginning consideration of specific situations of armed conflict involving child victims; at that meeting it began with consideration of a report by the Secretary-General on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Working Group is now engaged in the negotiation, to be concluded by its next meeting in August, of the recommendations to be submitted to the Security Council as follow-up.

The month of July 2006 thus represents a turning point in the activities of the Working Group. The ministerial debate in the Security Council scheduled for 24 July under the French presidency of the Council will come at the right moment to spur on these activities and help in successfully moving on past this turning point.

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Letter dated 7 July 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of Honduras has issued a press release regarding the missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see annex). In the communiqué the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Honduras has condemned the missile programme and has called on the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea to halt it. The Government of Honduras expresses its support for the efforts of the international community to achieve a diplomatic solution to the situation and for the initiatives and recommendations of the Security Council on this matter.

I request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ivan Romero **Martinez**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 7 July 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Spanish]

Communiqué

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Honduras hereby declares that the Government of the Republic of Honduras strongly condemns the missile programme developed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which represents a threat to global peace and security and has a direct impact on the cost of oil and fuel.

In that connection, the Government of the Republic of Honduras wishes to express its full support for the efforts of the international community and calls on the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to suspend this type of programme forthwith.

Directorate of Institutional Communication

6 July 2006